



The Recruit Firefighter Program follows modern educational theory in these four main areas:

1. **Academics** (Cognitive Learning Domain)
2. **Skill Proficiency** (Psychomotor Domain)
3. **Professional Demeanor** (Affective Domain)
4. **Work Capacity** (Physical Fitness for the occupation)

For each of these areas, in which the recruits are both **trained and measured**, there is an opportunity to prepare and improve readiness and performance prior to arriving and during residence. In that regard, each area is described below:

**1. Academics** – The academic areas are mostly considered to be classroom and lecture related. Our Recruit Firefighter Program has developed and used a 5-part process for enhancing the retention of the academic material presented. It first begins with the reading of the material (1), and the completion of assigned homework (2). Those activities are followed by a classroom lecture (3). Next, the Recruit is presented with skill demonstrations and practice (4). Lastly, the Recruit completes a quiz on that given subject or unit (5).

**How Best to Prepare for the Academic demands:** Each prospective student must evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of his or her learning style from prior experience. Although comprehensive in scope, most of the reading material is written to the early high school level. At the very least, the Recruit must know that excellent time-management is mandatory for success in this program. This is a rigorous program in all regards, and moves forward at a fairly rapid pace. Falling behind is the surest recipe for failure; historically, Recruits who have fallen behind have not caught up. Once that is understood, a sense of personal note-taking, study strategies, and reading comprehension should be considered. There are many resources available prior to attendance that can assist the prospective Recruit with the development of improved ability in all academic endeavors. Once on campus for the start of class, the Recruit Operating Guidelines document will provide some additional suggestions in the Academic Success section.

**2. Skill Proficiency** – As described above, the skill development and mastery is delivered in a manner that coincides with the delivery of the academics. Students are instructed in practical skills activities after the first 3 parts of the academic presentations in a manner that best matches the intention of the academic material. There is a strong emphasis on a sequence of observing the skill, trying the skill, practicing the skill, and perfecting the skill.

**How Best to Prepare for the Skill Proficiency demands:** The demands of the fire service require an unusual level of mechanical aptitude. Reading about the profession will provide some insights into those demands. A strong inclination to capture the academic deliveries is critical to translating that learning area to skill proficiency. Cutting corners on the reading, review, and study of the academic areas will hinder the ability to understand the performance of the associated skills. For those Recruits who have the benefit of prior firefighting training, analyzing the prior successes or struggles will help with gaining a better understanding and mastery in the Recruit Program. While enrolled as a Recruit, every opportunity should be considered to be a “training opportunity”, as consistent and thorough practice has always produced the best results.



**3. Professional Demeanor** – The firefighting profession has a rich and storied history. It is a profession of paramilitary organization that demands a strong and serious sense of purpose in all regards. Recruits are taught the necessary organizational principles required for safe, efficient, and effective emergency operations. Beginning with the delivery and modelling of a strict chain-of-command of authority, Recruits are expected to demonstrate the attitude, behavior, and conduct that match the highest ideals of service to our communities. Every Recruit will dress, act, and conduct themselves as though they are being judged in the most critical of ways by those that they deem most worthy of their respect. Correspondingly, Recruits are taught the national Code of Conduct, and well as common ethical considerations of the modern fire service.

***How Best to Prepare for the Professional Demeanor demands:*** A self-analysis of a prospective Recruit's interest in the profession is critically important. In addition, because of the nature of the emergencies in which firefighters are called upon to respond, an understanding of stress and stress-response tendencies should follow. Engaging friends or family members in conversations about the respective Recruit's weaknesses in this area may provide a path or some direction toward improvements prior to arrival. This is stressful training for a stressful occupation. An early plan and approach to be of a "problem solving" temperament and personality requires more time for some than for others. Resolving uncertainties or issues just prior to or while attending the Recruit Program should be considered highly improbable. Essentially, a prospective Recruit is well-served by understanding why he or she chose the profession, and what commitment he or she was willing to make at the time of appointment. Following that interest and desire with a positive mental attitude is paramount to success in the Recruit Firefighter Program, and to enjoying the unique benefits of helping others. Once in residence, helping others to improve upon their weak areas in any regard has always seemed to provide positive mental benefits for all involved.

**4. Work Capacity** – Of all of the four main areas, this area has the most potential to undermine a Recruit's success. This is a very physically demanding profession, and it is unforgiving with age, infirmity, and weakness. CPAT is **NOT** the standard by which a prospective Recruit should measure his or her ability; it is only considered by our Recruit Firefighter Program to be a measure of one's ability to be physically trained. Not being physically prepared for the rigors of the profession always leads to poor academic performance (too tired to study), poor skill proficiency (too exhausted to concentrate, to practice and to perform properly), and a poor attitude about the training program (too stressed to appreciate the importance of the program demands). These are minor in comparison, however, to how a lack of physical work capacity can contribute to injury and death on the training or fireground. You must have a strong understanding of the demands of the Recruit Firefighter Program, and prepare to arrive as the occupational athlete that the profession requires.

On the following page is an overview of Physical Training elements of the Recruit Firefighter Program's Health, Wellness, and Fitness approach, and the broader Preparation Guide for this instructional area:



### **Physical Training Program Overview**

Our Physical Training (PT) program is designed for firefighters and incorporates a range and continuum of job performance activities. It is a highly disciplined atmosphere that will prepare the recruit for both their academy and fire service responsibilities. The program begins with a general overview, in a classroom orientation fashion, and includes information pertaining to physical fitness, job stresses, health issues, and sports injuries. That initial orientation will also describe the base-line testing, the schedule, and how the program advances during the entire recruit PT program. All recruits will then be physically and mentally trained in a number of ways throughout the program to approximate the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of firefighters in the modern fire service.

### **PT Class Schedule**

#### **Daily Focus Areas:**

**Mondays & Thursdays** -- Predominantly Strength and Endurance

**Tuesdays & Fridays** -- Predominantly Cardio Respiratory

**Wednesdays** -- Functional Training or Aquatic program

**Field-Level Testing (which is covered over a two day period)**

1<sup>st</sup> week, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> week (the middle of the schedule), and the 14<sup>th</sup> week

### **Daily Requirements:**

This is a highly structured, well-developed, and rigorous component of the Recruit Program that requires strong effort. PT classes are generally scheduled for 60 minutes. They begin at 0800 hours, except for the week of Night Fire Training. During the first three nights of that week, which is usually around week 8 or 9, PT classes will begin at 1500. Recruits will be notified in advance of any other changes to the schedule, changes in the start times, or adjustments to the length of the delivery of the material.

Recruits are required to be prepared before the start of each class. The training day will begin with a Personnel Accountability Report (PAR) and a readiness check. The PAR and Readiness Checks confirm that all recruits are accounted for, are clean shaven, have full water bottles, and have prepared and staged all needed equipment.

**How Best to Prepare for the Work Capacity demands:** Advance preparation for the rigors of Physical Training is mandatory. An athletic background, and/or a workout routine of limited dimensions will not be sufficient because of the manner in which the body utilizes the energy systems for work as a firefighter. We have seen many strength, endurance, and cardiorespiratory athletes who have still struggled with PT, because their training routines do not match the unique physical demands of firefighting. For that, we will train with higher intensity and fewer breaks than the lay person or civilian in order to mimic those requirements. We will create an understanding of the balance needed between the commonly understood fitness categories of Strength, Endurance, Cardio, Flexibility, and Body Composition in order to create optimum performance and injury prevention. At a minimum, a prospective Recruit should be able to perform all basic callisthenic body weight exercises with good form (push-ups, pull-ups, squats, lunges, etc.) in a series with jumping jacks and mountain climbers, as well as be able to sustain a run of a minimum of 1½ miles on an asphalt surface.